

to be done. That is my view. I cannot speak for all of my colleagues in the House and Senate. But I think there is some recognition—there are a couple of concerns that people have. First of all, as I have said before, the employees are sort of the pawns in this game. This is a struggle for whatever we hope will happen over the next 7 years. It is very important. But to somebody out there who is not working and only lives from paycheck to paycheck, it is not a very happy choice, and they should be paid, even though some are saying, "Well, you are paying people for not working." My view is that if it was voluntary on their part, you should not, but it is involuntary. They cannot go to work. Some tried, in Baltimore, to show up for work and they were told to go home. That is a long answer, I guess, to saying there has to be some way around this. That is why I thought, yesterday, that maybe the appropriations bills—if the President would consent to that—then we can probably figure out a way to get Labor-HHS out of here. We have one little provision—and the Senator from Vermont knows more about it than I do—on the foreign ops bill. I will work with the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if the majority leader is still on the floor, I hope that he realizes—I am sure he does—that there are many of us—I would say the majority of both Democrats and Republicans—who do want to come together on this issue and get it here in the Senate and get this finished. He mentioned the foreign ops bill, which is one where the distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] and I had the bill on the floor. We had, I believe, 193 items in disagreement with the other body. We settled 192 of the 193, and I think it is unfortunate that it is held up.

It is beginning to create a problem in the Middle East peace process with the Camp David countries. I think that is of some significance. I know all of us on the floor support the help we give those countries, especially at this critical time. I hope we might work that out. I think we can go through dozens of other issues, where it seems that the solution is so close and so within our grasp. Frankly, Mr. President, I wish the majority leader, the Speaker, and the President all the best in their negotiations, and the distinguished Democratic leaders in both the House and the Senate, who will join with them.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT'S VETO MESSAGES

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I want to make a comment to the majority leader. He mentioned during his comments that he would encourage the President to sign the three bills he has vetoed and would be willing to work with him to work out some of the problems that he had. I have a copy of the President's veto message on the Interior bill. I have reviewed all of these. In most cases, the differences are very small. I cannot help but think that the majority leader and the President could work out the differences. There are a couple items dealing with dollars, but a very insignificant amount as far as the total. This is a \$12 billion bill. The differences in dollars is very small.

A few issues maybe need to be clarified as far the administration and so on. There is no reason why this bill should not be signed. I know there was a front page article in the Washington Post today. I know there is a lot of concern about visitors not being able to visit parks and museums. There is no reason whatsoever that this bill should not be signed.

So I encourage the majority leader in his meeting with the President to see if we cannot make a couple small changes in the Interior bill, as well as the Commerce, State, Justice, and the VA-HUD bill, which would relieve a lot of the problems and anxiety for a lot of people all across the country, not just the employees, but also constituents that would like to have access to the parks and to the museums.

So I compliment the majority leader for taking that effort to the President. Hopefully, he will concur, and maybe we can at least resolve the conflict on three of these major items.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting Democratic leader is recognized.

HELPING VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there are some things, however, that are getting through. The Senate, in one of its final votes before adjourning for Christmas, passed legislation aimed at more than doubling the assistance that my State and others will have in hand to help victims of domestic crime and terrorism.

I mention this, Mr. President, because I think of the years I spent as a prosecutor and I remember so many times we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to prosecute a perpetrator, especially of a violent crime, both in the prosecution and in the incarceration, but the victim was usually the forgotten person. The victim got no assistance, the victim got no help, the victim was left to fend for himself or herself.

What we have done now is raise to half a million dollars in a special victims fund for Vermont, under the Vic-

tims of Crime Act and under an amendment that I propose, that will help these people. I think this makes a great deal of sense because the money comes not from the taxpayers, the money comes from the criminals. The assessments and the fines to the criminal will go into this fund.

Again, as a former prosecutor, I believe we should bring strong and effective prosecution as quickly as possible in these serious crimes. We have seen what happened in places like Oklahoma City. Let us not forget the victims. When we are setting out the punishment for the perpetrator of the crime, when we add fines and assessments, the money which can go to help victims all the better. In my experience, the victim is usually the person forgotten. All attention is on the criminal. This way, we will keep the attention on those convicted of violent crimes, but we will make them pay into a fund to help the victims.

I think it is much better. I think victims must be treated with dignity and assisted and compensated for their suffering. Who better to pay for the restitution than the perpetrators of those crimes themselves? I thank the Members of the Senate who have joined with that.

THE BUDGET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have talked about the budget. I have listened to the distinguished majority leader. I am absolutely convinced that if the distinguished Republican leader and the distinguished Democrat leader in this body could sit down with the President that we could reach those areas of compromise.

We have to understand that no matter what the issue is here, when there are many, many differing views, that nobody wins totally. We do not pass a Gingrich budget or a Dole budget or a Daschle budget, a Clinton budget or a Leahy budget, but we can pass a budget for this country and one that will bring us to a balanced budget but will also allow at least bipartisan cooperation on issues like education, environment, medical care for the elderly, and so forth.

I was concerned in the other body when I hear some say, "Well, let's lock everybody in a room and throw the key away until this is settled." I say to those same people, why did you not stay here last weekend and do it? Why did you not stay and turn the key on your own doors and stay here?

They are claiming over there in the other body that this is for a more efficient Government. This is the least efficient way to run a government, let alone a business—send everybody home so no work is being done, but then people are being told they will be paid for their lost time. They should be paid because it was not through their fault, but the American taxpayer is not being paid for lost services.

These Federal workers want to go back to work, they want to help run